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SUBJECT: CHILE: ILEA IN LATIN AMERICA

REF: SECSTATE 16077

1. Summary. Chile has the political and economic stability, modern infrastructure and security to serve as host of an ILEA of Latin America. The idea has also been received enthusiastically by various government agencies, but the GOC has not committed to offering a physical site. The February vacation month with most GOC ministries on skeletal staffing has slowed top-level decisions. Post will press for a definitive indication soon. End Summary.

2. Political Stability. Chile is a democratically stable country with a cooperative government. The Transparency International Corruption Index ranks Chile just behind the U.S.. The Freedom House Survey rates Chile as fully free in both political rights and civil liberties. The World Bank Governance survey shows Chile above the 75th percentile in every category measured, on par with the U.S. and the United Kingdom. Post does not anticipate any change to the current political stability.

3. Economic Climate. Chile has enjoyed two decades of exceptional economic growth. It has also resisted the periodic financial crises that have affected many other regions' economies. Standard & Poor's and Fitch and Moody's designate Chile's credit rating as an A (stable) and A- respectively. Labor disputes are not significant. The recently implemented U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement further deepens close economic cooperation. Post expects continued positive economic growth and stability.

4. Security Situation. Chile is considered a low-threat post. The uniformed and investigative police are honest and generally effective. Chile successfully handled the security for the APEC Leaders' Summit in November 2004, and cooperated with the U.S. when requested. Post is confident that Chile could provide a secure environment for the academy while remaining responsive to U.S. requests.

5. Infrastructure. Chile possesses a modern and well-developed infrastructure. Public utilities are reliable, and choice of carrier is available for phone, internet and cable. Ample lodging and dining facilities are available in Santiago and other major cities, which were used extensively during the APEC Ministerials and Leaders' Summit. Medical care is comparable to that of the US. Ambulance and other emergency services are available.

6. Physical Site. Post has discussed the ILEA opportunity, and left briefing materials, with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Carabineros (national police), and the Investigative Police (PICH). However, February is the one month when most Chileans take vacation. We have not been able as yet to get definitive word from the GOC on whether they have sufficient interest in ILEA to offer a physical site. MFA has informed us that, in principle, they would support locating ILEA in Chile, but that MFA does not have the resources to sponsor the Academy, and therefore either Carabineros or PICH must take the lead. The latter organizations have expressed interest in the proposal, but have not indicated they would commit, as yet. With key leadership returning to offices after March 1, post will continue to follow up.

7. Cost Sharing. If Chile decided to offer facilities, Post does not anticipate modest cost sharing would be a problem for Chile.

8. Transportation. Chile has a reliable transportation system used regularly by business and tourist travelers. Multiple carriers offer daily flights between the U.S. and Chile, as well as good connections to most of Latin America and Europe. Domestic (and international) flights are readily available by several carriers including LAN, a safe and successful Chilean carrier. An excellent and clean metro system facilitates movement within Santiago. Taxis are plentiful, relatively inexpensive and safe. Two primary ports are located within two hours of the capital, accessed by excellent highway systems. Main roads in Chile are paved and well-maintained. Receiving large shipments of equipment and supplies would not be problematic for the sea/air/land ports. Post is confident the transportation system is more than adequate for servicing a potential ILEA.

¶9. Political Will. The MFA's Director of Special Policy, Ambassador Winters, has confirmed Chile's interest in hosting an ILEA. The uniformed and investigative police forces have also shown strong interest in implementing the project. Post believes the GOC could bring a proactive and flexible approach to meeting ILEA's requirements.

¶10. U.S. National Interests. Enhancing Chilean judicial expertise and law enforcement, and increasing Chile's positive regional and international leadership roles are both priorities for Post. Locating a key law enforcement training center in what is arguably the region's cleanest country sends the right message.

¶11. Post believes Chile is potentially a strong candidate to host the ILEA under reftel host country criteria, but will need more time to ascertain whether Chile is willing to offer a physical site.
KELLY